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## RELATIONS BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

FAY-COOPER COLE

Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois

In this paper I propose to treat the subject—the relations between the living and the dead—not in its application to early or primitive society in general, but in reference to a single pagan tribe of the northern Philippines.

In his excellent volume, *Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*,<sup>1</sup> Lévy-Bruhl has treated this subject at length and has outlined a scheme, or a series of stages, through which he believes the less civilized races consider their dead and living to pass. I wish to apply this scheme to the Tinguian people of Northern Luzon, but first shall briefly review Lévy-Bruhl's attitude which leads him to adopt his method of treatment.

He holds that human mentality, in the main, is a social or collective product and that "the collective representation of primitive men differs fundamentally from our ideas or concepts, nor are they their equivalents." Civilized man acts in accordance with the precepts of logic, while the mind of primitive man is molded in accordance with the law of participation which, he asserts, is relatively indifferent to the law of contradiction. Such a mentality Lévy-Bruhl labels "prelogical."

To a man in this stage of society there is only a weak line of demarkation between the living and the dead. He lives with his dead, feeds and converses with the departed, and finds no contradiction in the fact that the deceased still participates, in a way, in the society of the living. For this mentality, death consists in participation or non-participation; that is, a dead person passes through a series of stages in which he participates more or less in life or death. In choosing examples for the elaboration of this argument, Lévy-Bruhl has considered only races of the type least

<sup>1</sup> Paris, 1910; for excellent reviews of this work see Goldenweiser, *American Anthropologist*, XIII (1911), 125, and *Current Anthropological Literature* (1912), 103.

civilized "where the totemic organization is still recognizable, if not in its virgin strength, as in the races of the Australian type."

Considering such a race, he selects an adult man who has been initiated and married and hence has attained his place in society. This individual dies and then passes through the following stages:

I. *Death between the time of the last breath and the funeral ceremony.*

Immediately after death the spirit is near by, and since it probably has not yet attained its spirit condition it is necessary to take heed lest the dead be angered and take revenge. The magic power of the funeral severs the participation of the dead with society, at least to a certain extent, and he enters stage

II. *The period between the funeral services and the end of mourning.*

By the time of the end of mourning the spirit has become adjusted to its new condition, and the taboos which previously rested on the family are removed. The ceremony held at that time has as its sole or principal object the final rupture between the social group and the dead, and the latter then enters stage

III. *The period during which the dead awaits reincarnation.*

After a time, more or less long, the spirit is reincarnated and passes into stage

IV. *The interval between actual birth and naming.*

Birth, like death, is considered of long duration. It begins at delivery and is accomplished only when the child is named and initiated.

V. *Covers the period of the naming up to initiation.*

VI. *Extends over the lifetime of the initiated adult.* When death again occurs the cycle is repeated.

The Tinguians to whom we shall now apply this scheme are a pagan people inhabiting the rugged mountain districts of North-western Luzon. They do not form a true tribe under the leadership of a single ruler or a body of rulers, but are broken up into many village groups, each one of which is governed by an oligarchy of old men. One of these, because of his better fitness, is called *lakay*, and he is really the head of the village; but all matters of importance are decided by the old men in council. Young men have little or no influence in the government. The people know

of the fact that the Igorot, who live to the south, have their villages divided into *atos* or exogamic groups; they also know that each *ato* contains its men's and women's dormitories in which the unmarried members of the group must live: but there seems to be no trace of such a custom ever having existed with the Tinguian, nor is there any other trace of a clan organization nor totemism.

Practically every act in the daily life of the people is governed by a belief in the spirit world. If a house is to be built, a field constructed, or a journey undertaken, the spirits are consulted, and if they are unfavorable the project is delayed or abandoned. A crop is never planted, harvested, or placed in the storehouses until suitable ceremonies have been held, while at all critical periods of life the spirits are consulted.

Above all is a powerful being known as Kadaklan. Next to him in importance is Kaboniyán, a friendly spirit who in ancient times taught the people how to sow and reap and how to cure sickness; and it was he who explained to them the details of the various ceremonies necessary for their well-being. Besides these two there are more than one hundred and fifty lesser spirits who are known by name, and many, many more who are less well known. These spirits are not the souls of the dead, of whom I shall speak presently, nor are they the forces of nature, although certain of them control the winds, the rain, and the lightning; but they are those who have existed throughout all time.

The superior beings communicate with mortals through the aid of mediums. These mediums are generally women past middle life, though men are not barred from the profession, who are chosen by having trembling fits when they are not cold, by warnings in dreams, or by being informed through other mediums that they are desired by the spirits. A woman may live the greater part of her life without any idea of becoming a medium and then, because of a notification, take up such duties. The candidate goes to one already initiated and from her acquires the details of the various ceremonies; she learns the gifts suitable for each spirit and the chants or prayers which must be used at certain times.

This training occupies several months, and then the candidate seeks the approval of the spirits. The wishes of the higher beings

are learned by means of a ceremony, in the course of which a pig is killed. The liver of the animal is examined and, if certain marks appear on it, the candidate is rejected or must continue her period of probation for several months longer before a trial is again made. When finally accepted, she may begin to summon the spirits into her body. Seating herself before a mat, she calls the attention of the spirits by striking certain shells or a bit of lead against a plate, then covering her face with her hands she begins to chant. Suddenly she is possessed and then, no longer as a person but as the spirit itself, she talks with the people. Certain mediums are visited only by low, mean spirits; others may have both good and bad, while still others may be possessed even by Kadaklan, the greatest of all. When not engaged in ceremonies, the mediums lead much the same sort of lives as the rest of the people; but when occupied with their duties they form a sharply marked, though unorganized, priesthood.

Magical practices enter all the ceremonies, but pure magic, generally used for evil purposes, is frequently employed against enemies. A little dust taken from the footprints of a foe, a bit of clothing, or an article recently handled by him is placed in a dish of water and is stirred violently. Soon the victim begins to feel the effect of this treatment and within a few hours becomes insane. A fly is named after a person and is put into a bamboo tube. This is placed near to the fire and in a short time the victim of the plot is seized with a fever. Likewise magical chants and dances may bring death to all the people of a dwelling.

I have dwelt thus at length on the spirits, mediums, and magic, because the life of this people cannot be understood without having had at least a glimpse of the forces which to such a great extent shape and control their daily activities.

I shall now start at the middle of Lévy-Bruhl's scheme and first treat of birth.

Shortly before the child is expected, two or three mediums are summoned to the dwelling. Spreading a mat on the floor, they place on it gifts for all the spirits who are likely to attend the ceremony. Then, bidding the men to play on a certain peculiar bamboo instrument, the mediums squat beside a bound pig and, dipping

their fingers in oil, stroke its side. Meanwhile they chant appropriate *diams* or prayers. This done, they begin to summon the spirits into their bodies, and from them the people learn what must be done to insure the health and happiness of the child. Later, water is poured into the pig's ear, that "as it shakes out the water so may the evil spirits be thrown out of the place." Then an old man cuts open the body of the animal and, thrusting in his hand, draws out the still palpitating heart which he gives to the medium. With this she strokes the body of the expectant woman, and later touches the other members of the family as a protection against harm.

The ceremony continues for several hours, and shortly before its close *gipas*, or the dividing, is made. The chief medium, who is now possessed by a powerful spirit, covers her shoulder with a sacred blanket, and in company with the oldest male relative of the expectant woman goes to the center of the room where a bound pig lies. After many preliminaries they decide on the exact center of the animal, then with their left hands each seizes a leg; they lift the victim from the floor and with the head-axes, which they hold in their free hands, they cut the animal in two. In this way the mortals pay the spirits for their share in the child, and henceforth the superior beings have no claims to it. The spirit and the old man drink of sugar-cane rum to cement their friendship and the ceremony ends.

After the delivery, the greatest care must be exercised, for otherwise the child will suffer from the acts of those about him. A fire is kept burning beside the mother, and for this the father must carefully prepare each stick of wood, for should it have rough places on it, the baby would have lumps on its head. The afterbirth is put in a small jar and is intrusted to an old man who must exercise great care in his mission. Should he squint while the jar is in his possession, the child would be thus afflicted. Bamboo leaves are inserted in the jar "so that the child will grow like the bamboo." If it is desired that he be a great hunter, the jar is hung in the jungle, while if he is to be an expert swimmer, and a successful fisherman, it is placed in the river. To keep evil spirits away, a piece of bark is kept burning below the house, while a miniature shield and bow and arrow hang just above the infant's head.

Within a few hours after birth the child is bathed and placed on an overturned rice winnower which is held by an old man or woman. Raising the winnower a few inches above the floor, she addresses the child, asking, "What is your name?" Then she drops the winnower. Again she raises it, tells the babe the name it is to bear, and again drops it. Two or three times more the winnower is raised and, after the child is advised to be diligent and obedient, is dropped. For a month certain exact rules must be followed; then on the last day of the period the mother carries out the little hearth on which the fire has been continually burning. At the same time she calls to the *anito*<sup>1</sup> mother to throw out her fire. It is the belief of the Tinguian that when a human child is born an *anito* child is likewise born, and the *anito* mother follows the procedure just described. There seems to be no further connection between the spirit and the human child.

Should the child be ailing, a ceremony may be made to aid in its recovery, and the following procedure not infrequently takes place. The infant may be placed on an old rice winnower and be carried out to a refuse pile and left, while the parents assert that they are throwing the child away, since they do not care for it. Evil spirits witnessing this will consider the child dead and cease to trouble it. Soon a woman from another house will pick up the child and secretly convey it back to the dwelling where it is renamed.

If the infant progresses normally nothing further is done for it until it is about two years old, when a ceremony known as *ol-og* is held. Time will not permit a description of this ceremony, the evident object of which is to keep the child in good health and to cause it to grow as lustily as the bamboo which plays an important part at this time.

The next event of importance in the child's life is its engagement. When a youth is very young—nearly always before he is eight years of age—his parents select a suitable wife for him, and if her people are agreeable a great celebration known as *pakálon* is held. At this time partial payment for the girl is made and a part of the amount is at once divided among the girl's relatives who thus become interested in the successful termination of the match, for

<sup>1</sup>The *anito* are lesser spirits.

otherwise they must return the gifts received. From this time until the children are considered old enough to marry, they live with their parents, but the final ceremony often takes place before either of the couple has reached puberty.

For the purpose of this paper it is not necessary for us to consider the elaborate ceremonies which are connected with marriage; but it is important for us to note that there are no observances when a child reaches puberty, nor are there ceremonies or observances of any kind to mark the passage from childhood into adult life. As a matter of fact a young man or woman is of little consequence in the more weighty matters of Tinguian life. It is only when advancing years and experience have gained for him the respect of his fellows that the man assumes a position of importance in the group.

When a man dies he is bathed and placed in a death chair, while about and above him are many valuable gifts which he is to take with him to his ancestors in Maglawa. A barricade of pillows is placed in one corner of the room, and behind this the widow clad in old clothes is compelled to remain during the three days that the body is kept in the dwelling. Meanwhile two or three old women sit near the corpse fanning it and wailing continually, but at the same time keeping close watch to prevent evil spirits from approaching the body or the widow. Near the door a live chicken with its mouth slit down to the throat is fastened as a warning to the evil spirit Seld-Ey that a like treatment awaits him if he attempts to injure the corpse. Many similar precautions are taken against other evil spirits.

During the first two days that the body is in the house the friends and relatives gather to do honor to the dead and also to partake of the food and drink which are always freely given at such a time. Burial is beneath the house, and on the last day an old grave already occupied by one or more of the ancestors of the deceased is opened. When the diggers reach the stones covering the chamber in which the skeletons are placed, they make an opening and thrust in burning pine sticks, meanwhile calling to the dead within, "You must light your pipes with these."

Before sunset the grave is ready, and then one of the mediums seats herself in front of the corpse, covers her face with her hands,



and trembling violently begins to chant and wail, bidding the spirit to enter her body. Suddenly she falls back in a faint, and for a moment is left in this condition; then fire and water are brought, the spirit is frightened away, and the medium gives the last messages of the dead man to his family. The body is now ready for the grave, but before it is moved a hole must be burned in each garment for "a dead person is always dressed in his best clothing and is sure to be robbed by the evil spirit Ebwa unless the garments are burned." The corpse is carried from the house, but before it can be taken to the grave it must be rested for a moment in a *balaua*, a large spirit house built only by well-to-do families having the hereditary right. Unless this is done the spirit will be poor in its future life and unable to build *balaua*. As soon as the corpse is deposited in the grave and the earth is filled in, a small pig is killed and its blood is sprinkled on the loose soil. Meanwhile the evil spirit, Seld-Ey is besought to accept this offering and to leave the grave untouched. As a further protection an iron plow point is placed over the grave, "for most evil spirits fear iron." That night the men gather in the house of mourning and sing *sang-sang-it*, a song in which they praise the dead man, encourage the widow, and pray for the welfare of the family. During this night and the nine succeeding a fire is kept burning at the foot of the house ladder and at the grave—a further protection against evil-disposed spirits.

During a period of ten days none of the relatives of the deceased is allowed to leave the village, neither may he take part in labors or pastimes. Should he violate this rule the spirit of the dead will exact vengeance, usually by taking the life of the culprit.

The morning following the burial, a shallow, box-like frame is hung above the grave and in it are placed dishes, food, tobacco, fire-making outfit, weapons, and clothing. Within the house the mat of the dead lies spread out ready for use, while at meal-time food is placed beside it for the spirit to eat.

At the end of the period of taboo the relatives and old men of the village gather in the house where, after many preliminaries, each one is anointed with oil and pig's blood. For this purpose the medium dips different kinds of twigs in the blood and oil, and as she draws them across the wrists or ankles of the people she says, "Let the *lew-lew* leaves take the sickness and death to another

town; let the bamboo make them grow fast and be strong as it is, and have many branches; let the *atilwag* turn the sickness to other towns." Last of all the widow is anointed and then she is free to go about as she desires, but until the final ceremony is made she is prohibited from wearing good clothing or ornaments, and is obliged to abstain from dancing and merry-making.

About a year after the funeral a great celebration called *layog* is held "to take away the sorrow from the family." Animals are slaughtered in great numbers and all kinds of food and drink are prepared for the guests. Most of the time is spent in feasting, drinking, and dancing, but spirit offerings are not neglected and, as in all other events of this kind, the mediums play an important part. The clothing and ornaments of the deceased are placed near to the dancing space, while close by are food and drink. At the conclusion of the dance the members of the family go into the house, roll up the mat used by the dead, open the doors and windows, and all are again free to do as they desire.

As has been indicated by the foregoing, the spirit of the dead stays near to his former home until the ten days of taboo are over, ready to take vengeance on any relative who fails to show him proper respect. After the blood and oil ceremony, he goes to his future home in Maglawa, a place midway between earth and sky, where conditions are much the same as on earth. The spirit will return to his former home at the time of the *layog* ceremony, but only on very rare occasions has one been known to appear after that. No further ceremonies are made for him, nor is he worshiped. He lives forever in Maglawa and never returns to earth in another form.

Now to consider Lévy-Bruhl's argument again. It would seem, according to his treatment, that the activities preceding birth and for the two years following would indicate that the child is not yet completely born, and that the magical acts performed at that time help him to attain full life. On the other hand, we have seen how strong adults may be affected by magical practices. The close connection between an individual, his garments, objects recently touched by him, or even his name, must be considered to apply even more forcibly to the helpless infant and the afterbirth. So strong is this bond that even unintentional acts may injure the babe.

We have already seen that evil spirits are always near, and that unless great precautions are taken they will injure adults if they can get them at a disadvantage, particularly when they are asleep. This seems to me to give the key to the problem. The child is not able to protect itself, therefore the adults perform such acts as they think will secure the good-will and help of friendly spirits, while they bribe or buy up those who might otherwise be hostile; and lastly, they make use of such magical objects and ceremonies as will compel the evil spirits to leave the infant alone. As the child grows in size and strength he is less in need of protection, and at an early age is treated like the other younger members of the community.

Naming, as we have seen, follows almost immediately after birth, while puberty and initiation ceremonies are entirely lacking. Apparently, then, a child at birth is fully alive, and at no time does he undergo any rites or ceremonies which make him more a part of the community than he was on the first day that he saw the light. If this is true, stages V and VI are not found in this society.

Passing now to death, we find ourselves in somewhat closer agreement with Lévy-Bruhl. After leaving the body, the spirit remains near to the corpse until after the funeral, and even then is close by until the ten days of taboo are over. He still finds need of nourishment and hence food is placed near his mat during this period. He has not yet visited Maglawā, and hence has not accommodated himself to his new existence. During this period, as at the time of birth, he is not in a position to protect his body from the designs of evil spirits, and if his relatives fail to give the corpse proper care it is certain to be mutilated. Many of the folk-tales tell of instances in which the relatives neglected the body which, as a result, was mutilated and eaten by base supernatural beings. It seems quite as plausible that the presence of the spirit near its old haunts may be for the purpose of seeing that its body is carefully attended to, as that it is awaiting the time when it will become adjusted to its new existence. We have already seen that certain acts of the living toward the corpse can affect the position of the spirit in Maglawā, and hence it is of supreme importance that its former owner guard against any possible neglect or injury to the body.

When this danger is over the spirit at once leaves its old home and returns again only at the time that the ceremony to take away the sorrow is made. From that time on he continues his existence in the upper world, neither troubling nor being troubled by mortals on earth. The idea of reincarnation is unthinkable to the Tinguian, and hence the third division of the scheme is lacking here.

Reviewing the material now before us, it appears that Lévy-Bruhl's fundamental thesis, namely, that for primitive man birth and death are only incidents in the cycle of the individual's life, or that birth, death, and reincarnation are only links in the chain, does not apply to the society we have just been considering. Neither does the idea hold that birth is incomplete until the individual, through initiation and marriage, comes into the possession of all the secrets and knowledge of the group.

We find ourselves in complete agreement with the conclusion that death does not completely sever the connection of the deceased with the group, and that the ghost still participates, to a great extent, in the affairs of the living. However, our survey of Tinguian beliefs and customs leads us to give a different explanation for the acts and ceremonies following the last breath, namely, the protection of the corpse from harm, and the endeavor to so treat the body that the ghost may be assured of a suitable position in the life to follow.

In conclusion I want to raise the question whether or not we are justified in saying that primitive man is indifferent to the law of contradiction and that his mentality is "prelogical"—as opposed to our logical method of thinking—even though we agree that he looks upon his dead as still participating in the life of the living.

In discussing this subject Rivers points out that the logical processes of primitive man are comparable to our own, but that his method of classification is different. He says, "If we grant the savage his categories, the beliefs and practices he deduces therefrom become plausible, nor do they involve any fallacy."<sup>1</sup>

As a case in point he refers to the custom of burying alive which Lévy-Bruhl considers an example of contradiction since the people act as if a person could be both living and dead at the same time.

<sup>1</sup> Rivers, "The Primitive Conception of Death," *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1912.

Rivers holds that this is true only as we apply our categories in place of those of the natives, for to them a man who is dead or who because of age, severe sickness, and the like, ought to be dead is *mate* as opposed to *toa* ("living"), and the burial of such a person is the perfectly logical consequence of his *mateness*. In other words, many examples of prelogical mentality may, with more exact knowledge, be merely cases in which the facts of the universe have been classified and arranged in categories different from our own.

While he thus differs from Lévy-Bruhl as regards the prelogical mentality of primitive man, Rivers adopts his idea of the "cycle of life" and gives it as his opinion that the categories of *mate* and *toa* are probably universal in low grades of society.

Referring again to our Tinguian material, we find that, at first glance, it appears to bear out this conclusion. A dead person or animal is referred to as *matay*, so also is one who is very ill and is expected to die; but if the speaker wishes to make it plain that life has actually ceased, he adds a suffix meaning "complete" or "finished" and refers to the dead as *matayen*. Here then a plain distinction is possible between the dead and the near dead although it is not regularly brought out in general conversation.

While we do not believe that, in this case, Rivers' example is valid, we do agree with his general argument that the difference between the mentality of the savage and civilized man is not so much in the way he reasons as in the way he classifies the facts of the universe.

We are in full accord with Lévy-Bruhl's statement that human mentality is, in the main, a social or collective product. If this be true we must expect to get different products in those circles of participation which vary, but it does not appear to us that hence it follows that "the collective representations of primitive men differ fundamentally from our own ideas or concepts, nor are they their equivalents," for in other circles we may still find their ideas or concepts equivalent to our own. Even in our own society, which is doubtless governed more by rational thought than is that of primitive man, we may find ourselves apparently acting in accordance with the laws of logic in some of our activities, while in others we are illogical, acting in harmony with the thought of our group.